

The McGill Daily

February 15, 1999
Volume 88 Issue 50
*"the lord must love the common people
because he made so many of them."
- the right start
since 1911*

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SSMU Debate Continues

BUT IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR
REFERENDUM

BY LOUGI

ADDARIO-BERRY

A week had passed since the last SSMU meeting. A week since SSMU president Duncan Reid referred to the SSMU council as "a bunch of fucking talking heads." Things had had a while to calm down. But emotions were still high regarding the issue of the referendum question; discussion continued late into the night, forcing a motion to "extend the meeting indefinitely," to allow time for all members of council to air their grievances.

The question up for debate was that of the upcoming referendum, to be held on March 9, 10, and 11. There is only one council initiated question up for consideration. As it stood prior to the council vote, the question read:

Do you agree to improve the quality of student resources at McGill by contributing \$38 per semester as a full-time undergraduate student (\$19 as a part time undergraduate student) to the McGill Student's Fund to be collected by McGill University on behalf of the Student's Society with the understanding that a full opt-out is possible?

The council did, however, vote to amend this, removing the words "with the understanding that a full opt-out is possible." What they did not remove was a sentence of text which appears in the preamble to the question (this sentence will appear, along with the question, on the election ballots), and *this* reads: "Any student will be able to opt out of the McGill Student's Fund for a full refund."

"The preamble to the question is integral to the meaning of the question, and, [as it stands] there is no contradiction between the

preamble and the body of the question," said Drew Cormack, the 1998-99 SSMU Chief Returning Officer (CRO).

By the SSMU constitution, any and all referendum questions to be presented to the student body must be sent to the CRO by February 9.

"The date was clear," said Cormack. "My role is to interpret the questions actually passed by council." And, as the question was sent to the CRO, the line regarding opt-out stays.

"I agree with how he has interpreted the constitution, as well as his own role," said Douglas Painter, the representative from Religious Studies. "Any document which passes through our hands has to be scrutinized carefully ... that is our responsibility."

This leaves the council with three options. First, let the referendum go ahead as scheduled. Second, postpone the question to the next referendum period. Third, challenge the CRO's ruling at the McGill Judicial Board. Tamana Kochar, Clubs Rep on Council, made a motion at the meeting to "rescind the referendum question," as it now stands.

"I don't think it upholds the principle of community in which the MSF question was posed," said Kochar. "I wanted us to do the right thing and to do it the right way."

Despite the initial sentiment of council when the vote to remove the opt-out clause was made, the vote to remove the new question from the referendum ballot was overturned by an 11-7 vote.

This is made more interesting by a second challenge to the referendum question, this one by

(continued on page 4)



IS MONTREAL TURNING ITS BACK ON THE HOMELESS? STORY PAGE 6.

Pound Defends Olympics

IOC WATCHDOG SPEAKS AT MCGILL, CONFESSES LOVE FOR McDONALD'S

BY DASHA

MERKUSHEVA

Uptight and controlled by the poised TV cameras, Richard Pound read from a script to an audience of sixty St. James Literary Society members at the Faculty Club last Tuesday.

Infamous as the corruption cop for the International Olympic Committee, former Olympic athlete, and recently appointed to the post of Chancellor of McGill, Pound used the event to defend the "Olympic Spirit."

Pound started off by describing the history of the Olympic movement, its mission and organization. He stressed the volunteer nature of the IOC and its in-

dependence from politics and economics: "All members of the IOC are volunteers, not one member including the President gets paid. It's a self-regulated body, which doesn't get support from any government anywhere in the world."

Then Pound pointed out the obvious flaws of the IOC which led to the recent bribes scandal. The IOC itself consists of more than a hundred members from which an Evaluation Committee is formed in order to pick the city for the upcoming Olympic Games. Members of this Committee go to the candidate cities and evaluate their capacity to host the

Olympics. In addition, delegations from the cities themselves come to the IOC.

"This is a process, not unlike the ones businesses go through trying to attract companies from other cities or countries. It's a major lobby mechanism," explained Pound.

As the years passed by and the Olympic movement grew, Pound said, the economics of hosting the Games drastically changed. The bigger money means bigger temptations: "Those higher stakes lead to complications on both sides of the groups involved - both cities and our members."

(continued on page 10)

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Letterz to the Editor

Phallus as Power

I appreciated James Yap's letter regarding my two recent opinion pieces. I confess that the possibly perceived contradiction had not escaped me, but I thought I'd save the footnote as a comeback to potential accusations of "libel" (but any excuse'll do).

The underlying theoretical argument in both pieces is the same: the phallus is the ideological signifier of power, prestige, and control. Men congratulate themselves for having it, and women are derided for lacking it. The assertion of women's lack aids domination (we can never live up, and when we try, we are put back in our place, reminded of our lack). The male gaze, when focused on women, typifies this emphasis on lack (articulated as imperfection - there's always some flaw). Yet when the gaze is applied to men, the same threat

does not appear. Since the male body is not "fundamentally lacking," flaws do not symbolize lack in the same way. Rather, the phallus is held up and glorified consistently (phallic images are everywhere). According to my own logic, then, calling Pound "the Dick" is not an insult, but an assertion of his power.

Mr. Yap is right, I use the rhetorical trick of sexual commentary on body parts; but the difference between my move and Hustler's is huge. I am not deriding a constantly derided object (the cunt), but poking fun at the arrogance of the McGill administration, by evoking images of their glorified ideological master signifier (the phallus).

I'd like to go further though, and point out that the subtext to my argument is the fundamental lack at the root of power (symbolized by Shappy's need for the Dick as substitute phallus). The recognition of power's fundamental lack (and drive to mask that lack) is, to my mind, the site of empowerment and resistance.

Erin Runions
PhD 6 Religious Studies

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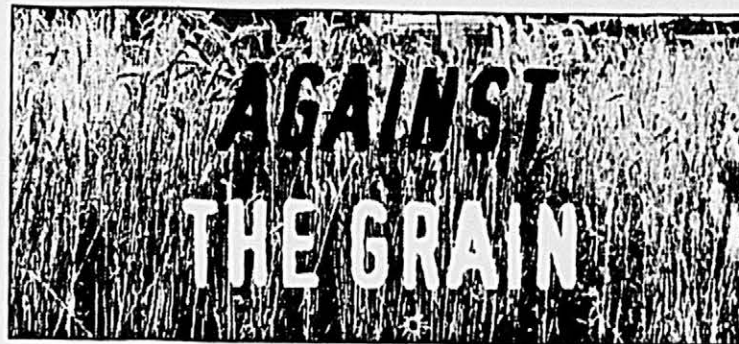
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Stock Market Turmoil Threatens the Big Boys

For \$30,000 each, the big players of international economics sat around the six-day World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland wearing stiff grins during Ted Turner's joy-in-philanthropy speech. Beneath the diamonds and pearls, however, the world's economic power houses hid their disconcertment with the current trend in the financial world.

The battered economies of Mexico, Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, Russia, and most recently Brazil, are finally encroaching upon the guarded territory of elite wealth. Stockholders of the so-called developed world, the same free market sloganeers of the early 1990s, are calling for controls on capital flows!

What the hell happened? According to a wide array of observers — from Lester Thurow, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), to Noam Chomsky — there has been a convergence, in the last two years, of two economic tracks (an elite track and a majority track) that began in the 1970s.

As recently as two or three years ago, the mainstream press, in all its triumphant heterogeneity, reported on the fairy-tale economy. In Canada, as in other nations, our government unleashed the wrath of *laissez-faire* fanaticism.

Our faithful Liberals boarded the neoliberal train with the likes of Blair and Clinton, calling to the people "All aboard!" Those refusing to leave the station were labeled heretical lunatics, perhaps well-meaning, but surely not rational individuals looking forward to the new millennium.

But as Noam Chomsky points out in a February interview with Z Magazine, "... people have always had different ideas about economic development, and every time they're completely certain that it's right, and they're completely certain it's going to help everyone. But then it turns out, shortly afterwards, that it was all built on sand, and they switch to some other idea..."

So after headlines documenting stupendous economic records

for much of this decade, why now is there a change of pace? The answer

BY
JEFF
WEBBER

lies in that the 1990s never really was a decade of unprecedented prosperity for the vast majority of people. Since the 1970s there has in fact been an erosion of most people's living standards, working conditions, and real incomes, which for most was only amplified in the last decade. The flip side of the coin, of course, is that there has never been so many billionaires paralleling the impoverishment of the general population.

Since the early 1970s, the beginning of our current economic crisis after the post-World War II Golden Age of Capitalism, we've seen steady economic erosion, and, for a period therein, even corporate profits were lowered. However, in the 1990s, as Chomsky notes, corporate profits have accelerated rapidly without a corresponding rise in prosperity for the rest of the population. It wasn't until the minute sector of superrich was affected by the recent climax of the economic breakdown, that the press clued into a trend that's been evident for 25 years. The reason, quite simply, is that all the stories of the roaring economy only cite the stock market as evidence of prosperity.

Well, the stock market doesn't really concern a whole lot of ordinary people. In the U.S., for example, Chomsky notes, "close to 50 percent of the stocks are held by 1 percent of households; and most of the rest is held by the top 10 percent so that roughly 90 percent of the stocks are held by 10 percent of the population. If you look more closely, the richest 1/2 percent holds about 40 percent of the stock. For that sector, the economy is no doubt a fairy tale economy" For the approximately 2/3 of Americans out of this elite loop, however, the experience hasn't been so rosy.

It may be that the newspapers

are only now announcing the necessity of controls on global capital flow, but the need was expressed 20 years ago, when the Tobin tax — a small tax that would be levied on speculative capital flowing from one country to another each time it moved — was proposed by a Nobel prize-winning economist. There was reason to act then, but it was overridden because the detrimental effects of unregulated capital flow had yet to touch stockholders.

Why hasn't the 25-year, core erosion of the economy been fully realized by those afflicted? First, as has been mentioned, the press certainly depicted the scenario in such a way that one could only deduce that it was only him/herself who was experiencing a drop in real wages, or unemployment, or underemployment. The rest of the economy, apparently, was booming.

Thurow, the economist from MIT, would answer in two ways. Number one, the disintegration of income for average people has occurred gradually. They've worked to adapt, facing a slow, but cumulatively substantial, creep toward poverty. Number two, those who experienced depletion in their incomes were not alone as the press led them to believe.

Thurow illustrated during his seminar at the World Economic Forum, that in the U.S. — the country whose economy is constantly referred to by our government as an object of wondrous efficiency, low unemployment, and incredible prosperity — sixty percent of the population has taken a 20 percent cut in real wages in the past 20 years, while the number of billionaires has increased over 19 times from 13 to more than 250 in the past decade.

If the press measured more than the stock market, perhaps we wouldn't hear the never-ending cycle of monolithic, free market, economic solutions. Perhaps those who criticized the blind orthodoxy of neoliberal economics for the past quarter century would not have been villainized.

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Letters (cont'd)

Daily Textbook Material

Re: Eating Disorders not always Linked to Body Image (letters - Feb. 11)

I want to thank and compliment both the author and The McGill Daily for printing the most powerful, eloquent and informative pieces of information on eating disorders I have read in my twenty months of work on this problem. It should be reprinted in every major textbook on the subject.

David Sommer Rovins

Montréal's Musical Diversity Revisited

Re: Setting up House: The Search for Diversity in the Montréal Music Scene by Kelly Jackson (Feb. 11)

I was appalled to read that

Montréal has no musical diversity. First of all, the author takes into consideration only electronica and disregards all other types of music. Moreover, she seems to be searching more specifically for drum 'n' bass and techno events. But lack of these events does not necessarily mean that the Montréal music scene is not diverse....

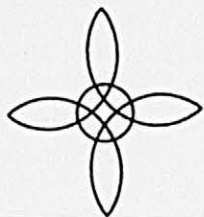
First things first, I even question the lack of d'n'b and techno events. Angel's has two d'n'b nights a week. For techno, you need not look further than nightclubs (i.e. Groove Society) and there is every now and then huge techno events (remember Cream back in the fall). House maybe plays a dominant role but other types of electronica music are alive and well in Montréal. In addition, [aside] from the realm of electronica music, you will find that the music scene is extremely rich and vibrant. I can't help but

mention the emerging underground ska scene.... If you're up for some hot latino music, salsa events are everywhere.... If you'd like to go back in time to the 50s, the swing scene will more than satisfy your desire.... If you're more of a punk, then be prepared cause Offspring is coming in March. And if you're a home-boy, DMX is gonna rap in Montréal....

So the author can't really claim that there isn't musical diversity.... Maybe the author should follow her own advice: "To promote diversity, we have to water its seeds; we need to go out and support the nights that do already showcase different kinds of music." If you'd like to see more d'n'b or techno, then do something about it. But do not make the claim that Montréal, "my city", does not have musical diversity.

Anonymous

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(continued from front page)

François Tanguay-Renaud, President of the First Year Civil Law Society [FYCL]. Tanguay-Renaud (see "Law Student to Challenge SSMU," February 8) claims both that the question addresses too many issues, and that it is unconstitutional for SSMU to increase students' fees twice in one year.

"[Tanguay-Renaud] will submit his complaints in writing to the CRO and he will make a ruling as to whether he agrees or not ... Then, if [the Law Students Association wants], they can take it to the Judicial Board," said Kochar. Tanguay-Renaud, on behalf of the LSA, will send the official complaint to Cormack this weekend.

Greening McGill

Another item which came up for discussion was the Greening McGill campaign, organised by QPIRG.

"The [Presidential Affairs] committee supported the motion to be proposed by Duncan [Reid] and myself," wrote Presidential Affairs Committee (PAC) Chair, Melissa Pallett. Pallett, Reid, and representatives from Greening McGill have been meeting to discuss SSMU's position on the cam-

paign.

Pallett later motioned that "SSMU council supports the efforts of the Greening McGill campaign and urges McGill University to reassess its policy on environmental issues." The motion was unanimously approved by council.

Management Winter Carnival.

The other presentation made to council was by Hugh Sturgess, President of the Management Undergraduate Society (MUS), and by Shiraz Rehman, one of two coordinators of the Management Winter Carnival. Their presentation spoke to the possible offensiveness of certain events at Carnival; in the words of the letter "the topic has been one of great debate in past years ... please read the attached carefully and address your concerns with respect to the specific areas of improvement ... indicated."

In the attached report regarding the events of winter carnival, MUS acknowledged that "unfortunately, some individual participants made some questionable decisions, and we were forced to act." The report also mentioned that one "team's chant was presented to Carnival and deemed to be offensive," and

that "one of the first year teams created a [snow] sculpture that was in poor taste."

The report's conclusion, however, was that "as a whole ... Carnival 1999 was quite a success," and this raised questions from some meeting attendees, including representatives from SACOMSS and Queer McGill. Questions were raised as to the offensiveness both of group chants and one skit, allegedly portraying two lesbian women in a demeaning way.

Rehman was also questioned as to one of the group names, the Hormones, allegedly "split up on the uniform to read 'whore-moans.'"

"The team name was absolutely not split up in any way," said Rehman at the time. When speaking with reporters after the meeting, however, Rehman's message was slightly different. "There's supposed to be a double-entendre - that's why it's funny," said Rehman.

The report concluded that "... with a continued effort ... we can keep Carnival the best social event at McGill." Despite the tenuousness of this claim, it remains to be seen whether efforts of SACOMSS, MUS, and Queer McGill will pay off at Carnival 2000.

Voices Still Unheard

CONCORDIA PRESENTS NATIVE CONFERENCE

BY ENISONE L.

KADIRI

You need more than a paternalistic attitude and a big wad of cash to solve social, political, and economic problems; the current situation among Aboriginal peoples exemplifies this fact. Two years ago, amidst much hoopla and controversy, the recommendations of the costly Royal Commissions Report on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) were made public. In this forum, RCAP's suggestions were the subject of much fawning and scorn. Many wondered if the suggestions could possibly correct the paternalistic big wad of cash relationship the federal government has historically had with Canada's Aboriginal peoples. Then, the report fell out of the media's spotlight. So what happened to its innovative social, political, and economic recommendations?

This timely and important question was supposed to be the subject of the panel discussion held last Tuesday evening at Concordia University's school of Community and Public Affairs, as evidenced by the advertisement for the event which read: "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP): Adopted or Overlooked". However, the discussion panel moderated by documentary filmmaker Alanis Obamsawin talked more about the poor treatment Aboriginal peoples received and continue to receive from the federal government and the resultant social problems amongst this population rather than about the advertised issue. The panel which included Dr. John McCallum, Chief economist of the Royal Bank, Nadia Ferrera, a registered Art Therapist and RCAP researcher, and Ghislain Picard, the regional Chief of the Assembly of the First Nations of Québec and Labrador was also notably missing government representation.

The panel engaged in a diverse and lively discussion on the issues and perspectives surrounding the rights of Aboriginal peoples within Canadian society. From the now expired residential school system which stole children from their families and communities to the Oka crisis of the early 1990s, Canada's Aboriginal peoples have faced a number of social injustices. Also, though their rights are entrenched in the Canadian constitutions, they are not clearly defined.

Further, panel member John MacCullum, former Dean of Arts at McGill, contemporized the Aboriginal situation: "It is a sad situation amongst our Aboriginal peoples today. Although the federal

government today has allotted funds for various programs to aid the plight of the Aboriginals, it is quite evident that increased expenditures are definitely needed."

Ferrera agreed, having worked with Aboriginal peoples for ten years, but she was ambivalent about using money as a band-aid solution.

"Since I have been working with these people I have not seen funds promised by the federal government to create social programs," said Ferrara. "Increased funds will not be a cure all for the problems that surround Aboriginal communities, but it would be a viable aid in creating social programs that these communities need to aid them."

More specifics on increased spending and how this fits in with RCAP may have befitted the discourse of the discussion panel but this was not entirely forthcoming. Instead, the Minister of Indian Affairs, Jane Stewart's recently

timistic about future changes. "It is about time that the federal government recognizes that the First Nations are a people and we as a people have the right to determine our destiny."

However, although public opinion polls indicate that non-Aboriginal Canadians show a consistent level of sympathy with Aboriginal peoples, there is a growing concern among Canadians about the extent and cost of change. MacCallum said, "It will cost the tax payer a lot of money and public opinion may not be in favour of devoting billions of dollars to a program if they do not understand the issues and do not know where the money is going."

To this sentiment, the panelists contend it is important to educate Canadians about the issues Aboriginal peoples face today. Each panelist maintained that education and seeking out a common



PHOTO BY SAMEER FAROOQ

D. J. McCallum speaks at "Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Adopted or Overlooked?" presented by Concordia.

launched reform program "Gathering Strength" was briefly explored. An initiative aimed at bringing an end to the cultural destruction of Aboriginal communities, it promises to provide large amounts of money, land, and decision making power to Aboriginal communities. These reforms are still under negotiation.

There has been an increasing amount of support for these new government initiatives as well as skepticism. Chief Picard was op-

ground does not solely rest on the rest of Canadians but on Aboriginal peoples as well.

"There needs to be a holistic framework of healing to heal the and strengthen Aboriginal communities," said Ferrara. "Through this framework an Aboriginal wisdom will be attained. Through this wellness and through the help and support of the rest of Canada there will be Aboriginal wellness and a greater strength and wisdom amongst all Canadians."

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BY REBECCA ROSENBLUM

"Homeless people are at a much higher risk for infectious disease, premature death, acute illness and chronic health problems than the general public. They are also at higher risk for suicide, mental health problems and drug or alcohol addiction. Their situation is exacerbated by poor nutrition, poor hygiene and a higher likelihood of experiencing violence or trauma on the street or in a shelter." (Page 114, City of Toronto Report of Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force: Taking Responsibility for Homelessness, January 1999)

Last Wednesday, 200 angry demonstrators gathered in front of the Parliament Buildings to protest Ottawa's "War against the poor" and general lack of action to help the homeless. Several protesters roughed up Progressive Conservative Party Leader Joe Clark when he entered the crowd. At the end of the day, eleven people had been arrested.

Why were these people so enraged? On this particular day, they were denied a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss issues of importance to the homeless — such as social housing — even though they had made a formal request months ago. This rebuff prompted much of the conflict between police, the RCMP riot squad and the demonstrators. Yet it wasn't just this particular denial that so enraged the crowd, but rather the government's general inaction in addressing the country's overwhelming problem of homelessness. Among Wednesday's crowd, there were many people who said that they were now, or had been in the past, homeless. They had come to demonstrate that the options and resources open to the homeless are insufficient and declining.

The poor — and their claims — are not without support. Earlier this year in Toronto, the Mayor's task force on homelessness released its report. At 291 pages, the report outlined no less than 105 recommendations to improve the situation.

Homelessness is a problem big enough to warrant 105 suggestions, 200 furious protesters on the streets of Ottawa and three freezing deaths on the streets of Toronto last year. Shouldn't it be on the cover of every newspaper and the tip of every tongue?

Obviously, it isn't. Once it has been said that every human being should have shelter and once it has been said that everybody doesn't, all the rest seems just so ... overwhelming. But keeping the problem front and centre is the only way to help the thousands of men, women and children who find themselves with nowhere to go.

"Funders, planners and service providers focus on stop-gap measures; a crisis mentality that can be seen in the annual, pre-winter panic to find more temporary shelter beds (Overview, p. 3).

Adrian Bercovici is an amiable man in his mid-seventies, wearing a cheerful sweater. Everyone who passes by greets him warmly and with more than a touch of respect. Bercovici is the executive director of the Old Brewery Mission, responsible for organizing food, clothing and beds for the three hundred or so homeless men that sleep there every night. This is a man who knows the humanity of homelessness — having faced it as a child in Romania — as well as the intricacies of business — having worked for many years as director of finance and administration at the Canadian National Railway.

"This is the lowest point that a human being can end up in the city of Montréal. It's very important to realize that this is the bottom. Sometimes people have to reach bottom to be able to help themselves", he states. These are hard truths to understand, especially for those of us who have never been near this level of poverty. Illustrating this point further, Bercovici explains the "Three levels of poverty":

1) People who do not have enough money to make through the month, so they supplement through the approximately 450 food banks in Montreal

2) When that becomes insufficient, people turn to soup kitchens (he estimates that there are 20-30 in the city).

3) Then, when all these options fail, a situation will occur that pushes them onto the street, and that's when the Old Brewery comes in.

People become homeless for a range of reasons - alcohol or drug dependence, mental health problems, gambling addictions or economic poverty - those who have

lost their jobs and can not obtain new ones before they run out of money.

Bercovici is ambivalent about the new Report out of Toronto. While he applauds some of the goals that it hopes to achieve, he cautions that one should not "exaggerate the problem, because then it becomes over-

whelming and no one wants to do anything about it. We can't sit and judge...I'm sure there are things we could've done as a society, as individuals...Think big but start with one step."

His major complaint about the recommendations in the report is their multitude, which seems to have the potential to diffuse the meaning of the report, or, worse yet, paralyze the government with demands. "When you have 105 recommendations, what is the likelihood of getting them implemented? I would do ten."

Another problematic aspect of the Report for him is its emphasis on eliminating emergency shelters and hostels like the Old Brewery in favour of low-cost housing units. "You can't stop homelessness by building 50 buildings...you've got to touch them somehow", he says, referring to the fact that perhaps all the subsidized housing in the world will not help people who can not get to them because they are too sick, too alienated, too used to living outside - or beneath - mainstream society.

"I would love to be put out of business!" remarks Bercovici. This is something he sees as a long time off, and perhaps an impossibility. "Society has failed a lot of people," he continues, "We have terrible pressures of achievement. Sometimes people just can't."

The Report seems fairly determined to pull what it calls "chronic hostel users" out of the shelters and into mainstream, or at least supportive housing. This view seems to overlook the fact that very few single homeless peo-

ple tend to go from shelters to independent living. The rate of "getting people successfully off the streets into apartments is now 5%, but when I arrived here it was 1%," says Bercovici.

His counterpart at Pavilion Patricia MacKenzie (the Old Brewery's women's shelter), Laure Dautet has seen similar statistics. Of her "successes" in moving people from the hostel to the mainstream rental market, she's had since the opening of her hostel in March "maybe five. But on an upward scale, we have people who have gone from transient to resident, accepted the rules here...We have small victories: they agree to accept medication. Their general well-being and health, those are our concerns."

It can hopefully be said these are everyone's concerns, although there are disagreements over how best the needs of health and well-being can be met. The problem is, that which bureaucrats call "feasibility" - more commonly called money- is in short supply.

Recommendation #8: The City should upgrade hostels to ensure that they all provide a safe, clean environment with single beds (no dormitory bunks), lockers, and sufficient showers and toilets.

This report was based on nine years of research and studies headed by Anne Golden, President of the United Way of Greater Toronto. It combines information on the problems facing Toronto's homeless today with the famous 105 recommendations on how to solve these problems in the future. The goal of the ideas con-

tained in the report is not just the day to day survival of the homeless — warm beds and donated Christmas dinners. Golden and her team want to see a genuine move to get people off the streets for good. Sometimes their recommendations seem to hit the nail on the head. Other times, as with their push to get rid of emergency shelters, they seem to disregard some of the harsher aspects of reality.

It remains to be seen if the Report could be extrapolated to apply to other cities in Canada, or even if any of its recommendations will be effective within Toronto - if they are implemented at all. At first glance, the Action Plan seems to be a jumble of common sense, bleeding hearts and careful economic planning. However, this may be just the combination that will appeal to the people in Queen's Park and on Parliament Hill. An added appeal of the report is that it is careful not to pin blame on (and thereby alienate) any one government or party, instead tackling root causes. The question, however, still remains - can this report help?

Recommendation #46: The use of outreach workers should be expanded to move chronic hostel users into stable housing.

The lobby of Pavilion Patricia MacKenzie is entered through a locked door - you buzz from the street to be let in. Inside, there is a small reception window, an elevator, and shiny wood bench that curves along a brick wall that later turns out to separate the

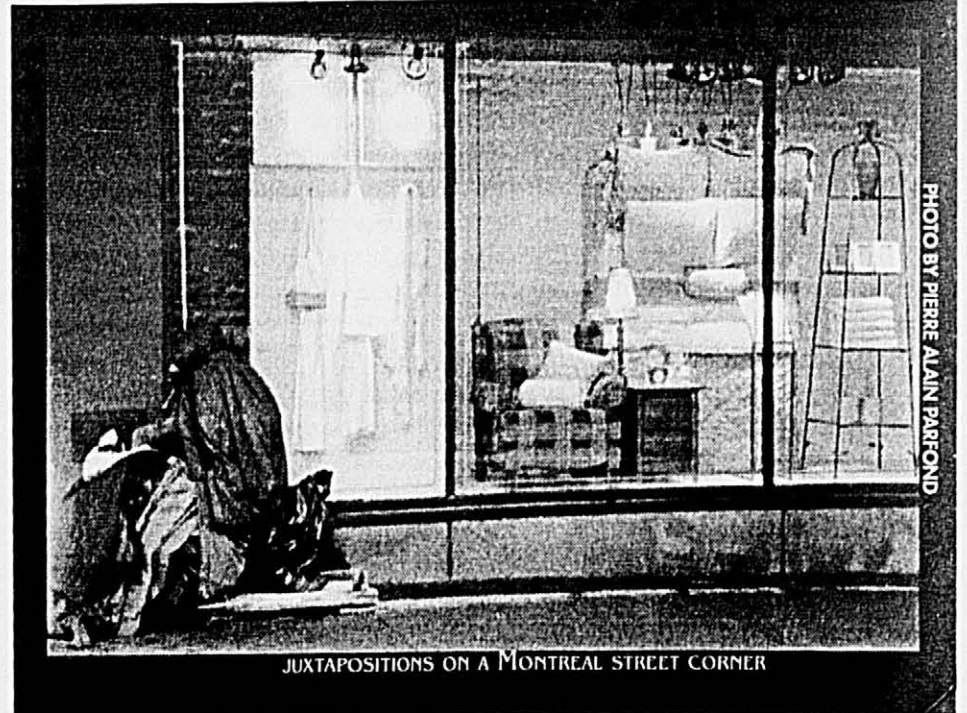


PHOTO BY PIERRE ALAIN PARBOND

JUXTAPOSITIONS ON A MONTREAL STREET CORNER

IS THERE A SOLUTION FOR HOMELESSNESS?

entryway from the dining room. There is a pay phone on the far wall.

The area is almost never empty. Members of the staff dart briskly through the hall. Residents come through too. Some come in, use the phone, and leave. Some sit down next to me on the bench to smoke. Some don't really seem to have a reason for being there.

There are no stereotypes being lived out. A woman in her forties with thick eye make up and dark, straight hair marches through and disappears into the hallway. I find out later that she is the process of being kicked out for breaking too many of the house rules. A jittery young girl in sweats comes in sits down, smokes, gets up and leaves, comes back, talks to someone, leaves, comes back... A woman with a gray crew cut and long tan skirt is the only one who speaks to me, although most give a nod or smile. She asks something in French, about "indigence" - homelessness. Probably she is asking if I am here to do the arti-

cle on it. I nod and smile. Maybe she was asking me if I am homeless myself.

Laure Daudet emerges from the hectic office and brings me back inside with her. There are 5 people in the small space where we sit down to talk.

"The men get a lot of gambling, alcoholics - we have mostly mental health problems, followed by substance abuse." She tells me later, that among the 32 residents of the hostel, "maybe two" are there for strictly economic reasons.

Life on the streets (and in shelters) is a little bit different for women. "Out of the homeless population, 25% of what they know are women." Daudet tells me.

Felicia Karsouos, the supervisor at the Mission chimes in, "But that's not counting the ones that hook up for a week here and a week there with all kinds of guys."

How do women end up in this situation? Do they follow the same steps of poverty that Bercovici out-

lined? Not always. "Most of them are mental health patients" Daudet explains. "They're in an apartment, stop taking their medication, ... lose their apartment: they're homeless. Combine that with substance abuse..." As well, there are "people in their mid-life crisis who go into a depression and lose everything. Their husband leaves them, all of the sudden they are without income..." It's a slippery slope.

Both Bercovici and Daudet take me on tours of the hostels. Although Patricia MacKenzie houses about 84 compared to about 300 at the men's shelter, there are similarities: big windows, clean, brightly painted walls, narrow cots, lots of showers and washing machines. Big communal rooms with 12 to 16 to 30 beds. Not all shelters are this nice, they tell me. I believe them: while it's hardly ideal, there is no squalor visible.

Recommendation #63: An addictions and mental health outreach team should be established, coordinated by the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health...to connect homeless people who have severe addictions or concurrent disorders to the harm-reduction facility.

Although reports vary, it can be estimated that about a third of people on the streets suffer from some sort of mental illness - if you consider single women on their own, that fraction could go up to as much as three quarters.

In the 1960s and 1970s, mental hospitals in both Canada and the United States began to release patients in to the general community. The goal was to move from long term residential care to in home, medication-based care with frequent check-ups for those patients that were able. This would reduce mental health care spending considerably while allowing

patients to have connections in the outside world, be more independent and still receive care. A nice idea, but not what happened.

Although the motives behind the emptying of psychiatric hospitals were essentially good, the financial and logistical limitations of keeping track of people, an overdependence on pharmaceuticals and a host of other problems led to extremely poor conditions for released mental patients. Many could not find suitable dwellings, many stopped taking their medication, many could not cope with the world outside the hospital with now support - in short, many ended up on the street.

"The hospitals fill the patients' pockets with pills and put them on the street. Then they come to us. Our mandate is to shelter and feed people...we don't know how to handle a psychotic breakdown," says Bercovici, of the high mentally ill population at the Old Brewery.

Kim Bernhardt, a member of Anne Golden's staff, remarks that the supportive housing the Report suggests will provide "independent living space and supervision" to many people suffering from mental illness. This is one of the highest risk groups on the streets because, in addition to lacking shelter, they may also lack the resources to seek help or protect themselves while "sleeping rough" (living out of doors).

This may not be enough, however. Many patients are discharged from hospitals too early, or too easily. They may still be ill, or may not be able to commit to a pill-taking regime. In addition, someone who has spent a few weeks in a mental hospital who was in precarious economic circumstances before entering may not have an apartment to go back to. People are literally going from the hospital to the street.

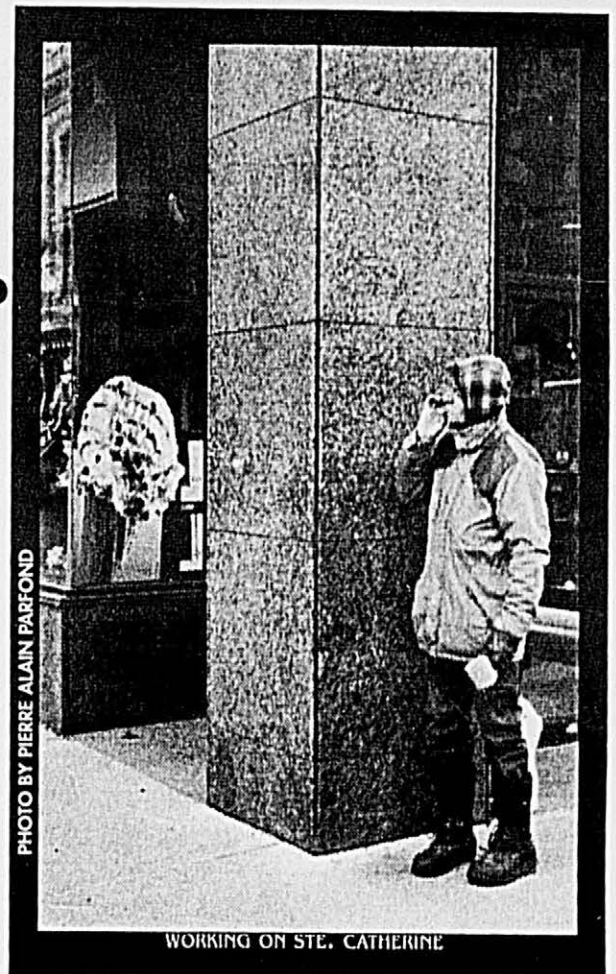
This report demonstrates that the problems are solvable and the solutions are available. On that basis, we have a moral obligation to take the actions needed.

It is more than conspicuous in this article that no homeless people were interviewed in the study of their condition. That is the fault of the author. Evenings, writing out questions for the next day, I could never think of any that didn't make me sound like what I am - a hick kid in an expensive coat who only skips meals on extra-busy days, a kid who will be done with this problem when the paper goes to print. I couldn't imagine why anyone who had been endured the discomfort, the humiliation, the misery of not having a place to sleep would feel like telling me about it.

I wouldn't have the comments of any homeless people at all, if it weren't for a woman I'll call Marie, the same woman who spoke to me in the Patricia MacKenzie lobby. As I toured the hostel later on in the afternoon, we came into a large room with perhaps two dozen beds. Most were empty but a few women were napping. Marie raised her head when we entered and showed Ms. Daudet her bright pink stuffed animal and the two chatted for a few minutes in French. Then we continued to examine the room. As we were leaving, Marie called out to me but again I could not understand her thickly accented French.

"Je pense qu'elle n'aie pas compris. Elle est anglaise," Daudet explained gently.

Marie nodded, and repeated what she had said in perfect English: "All the people here are good. If there were no place like here, I would be in the streets." All I could do was write down her words.



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Canada

Student Leaders Split Over Impact of Social Union Deal

TOMMORROW'S BUDGET WILL INCLUDE MORE MONEY FOR RESEARCH

BY JASON CHOW

With the social union contract complete and the budget slated for tomorrow, federal policy is slowly shaping the fate of students. Whether or not students will reap any benefits is a different question.

The Social Union agreement signed earlier this month was condemned by the national lobby group Canadian Federation of Students for its lack of commitment.

A press release from the organization stressed the contract's weak defence for equitable tuition fees.

"Only a loosely-worded commitment to avoiding differential tuition fees from province to province was accepted by all provinces except Québec. However, the promise is tainted by wording that leaves room for differential fees 'if necessary'," it said.

CFS National Chairperson Elizabeth Carlyle was critical of the agreement for it failed to bind the parties involved.

"There is nothing in the agreement to enforce it. What it basi-

cally amounts to is an empty promise," she said.

"There are so many loopholes," she added. "It is very loosely worded. It's unclear what the consequences are [should the provinces not adhere] to their half of the contract."

Carlyle interpreted Québec's refusal to sign as a move to defend its "more accessible" education system: "Their concern is that they want to protect accessibility and quality.... They didn't want to lower their standards."

Canada's other student lobby group, the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, also held reservations. National Director Hoops Harrison noted that Québec's failure to sign would pose a large void in the efforts to develop national standards.

"[T]he reluctance of Québec to sign on is worrisome, and runs the risk of holding us back at a time when national co-operation is fundamental," said Harrison in a press release.

On the whole, Harrison applauded the agreement, calling it "a positive step to propel Canada

into a more competitive position vis a vis other countries in the global marketplace." In contrast to Carlyle, he saw the agreement as a move towards the "elimination of differential tuition for out-of-province students."

Carlyle did expect a few concessions from the federal budget due for release tomorrow. She foresaw increased funding for health research, but feared that most of the money would be placed in private-public research agreements.

"We're very wary of private funding for research," she said. "It compromises quality."

Carlyle also expected more money for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). Most of the money that will be devoted to the SSHRC would be earmarked for graduate students, she predicted.

She added that CFS had been continually lobbying for increases in research funding and thought that the money was long overdue: "We've been calling for this for years. It should have come years ago."

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Pound Defends Corporate Giants

NEW MCGILL CHANCELLOR MOVED TO TEARS BY McDONALD'S AD

(continued from front page)

The high stakes is a potential problem, in Pound's view, but what made the problem become "true" is the circulation of non-credible rumors and unfair tactics on the part of the media. Pound spent a good deal of time complaining about the media following him around and feeding off the scandal, which he perceived as a media creation in itself.

"There were no details or specifics, which we could follow up. Nothing was wrong, but accusations were made," said Pound regarding the past leaks in mass media such as the book "Lord of the Rings" which explored the IOC's corruption.

"We specifically asked the cities whether there are any actions on part of our members that we should deal with... We couldn't find anyone to come forward," said Pound about the possible past incidents with bribing.

It was only after the Salt Lake City story arose that many other cities voiced similar concerns with buying and selling votes, according to Pound. But a couple of weeks ago at a news conference

held in Toronto the officials were heard saying that right after the bidding they gave the top members of IOC the report about the illegal demands of some IOC members.

Himself the key person responsible for finding sponsorship and distributing licensing, and the chief negotiator for the IOC's multi-million dollar broadcast rights, it is curious that Pound is leading the investigation of the corruption in the committee.

Both Salt Lake City officials and IOC investigated the bidding process as the result of which the city got to host an Olympiad in 2002. As the result of the latter 1 of the 4 members has already resigned, 6 more are expected to, and there is not enough information on 4 more members to form any conclusion, according to Pound.

In an effort to further clear its name, the IOC is planning to drastically alter the bidding process and decide on the fates of the accused members during the next meeting its next meeting in mid-March. Pound commented: "We

plan to remove as many temptations as possible.... And at the same time restore public confidence."

Among the questions asked by the St. James Society members, those concerning doping and drug policies of the IOC, and those begging for "a bright future" of the Olympic movement, received the most attention.

To a gentleman concerned with the longevity of IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch's term, Pound responded: "The president is one of the stabilizing factors of the movement," and his longevity is only for the overall good. As to whether Pound sees himself as replacing Samaranch, incidentally a former minister for Francisco Franco's fascist regime in Spain, if the venerable Spaniard is forced to resign, he exclaimed: "Good question!"

Pound seemed very upset

about concerns raised over the healthy life style portrayed through the Olympics and its familial relations to McDonald's, an infamously unhealthy giant in the restaurant industry. He quickly rose to defend the fast food chain, rehearsing what amounted to little more than a McDonald's advertisement. Apparently one McDonald's commercial brings tears to his eyes.

Pound went on to say that the restaurant is "a very good and loyal sponsor of Olympic Games," devoted to "the promotion of Games and the explanation of what they are all about."

Overall, the main point Pound wanted to make in his lecture, was that the ongoing scandal will eventually pass and very soon the skies over all of our heads will be blue and without clouds.



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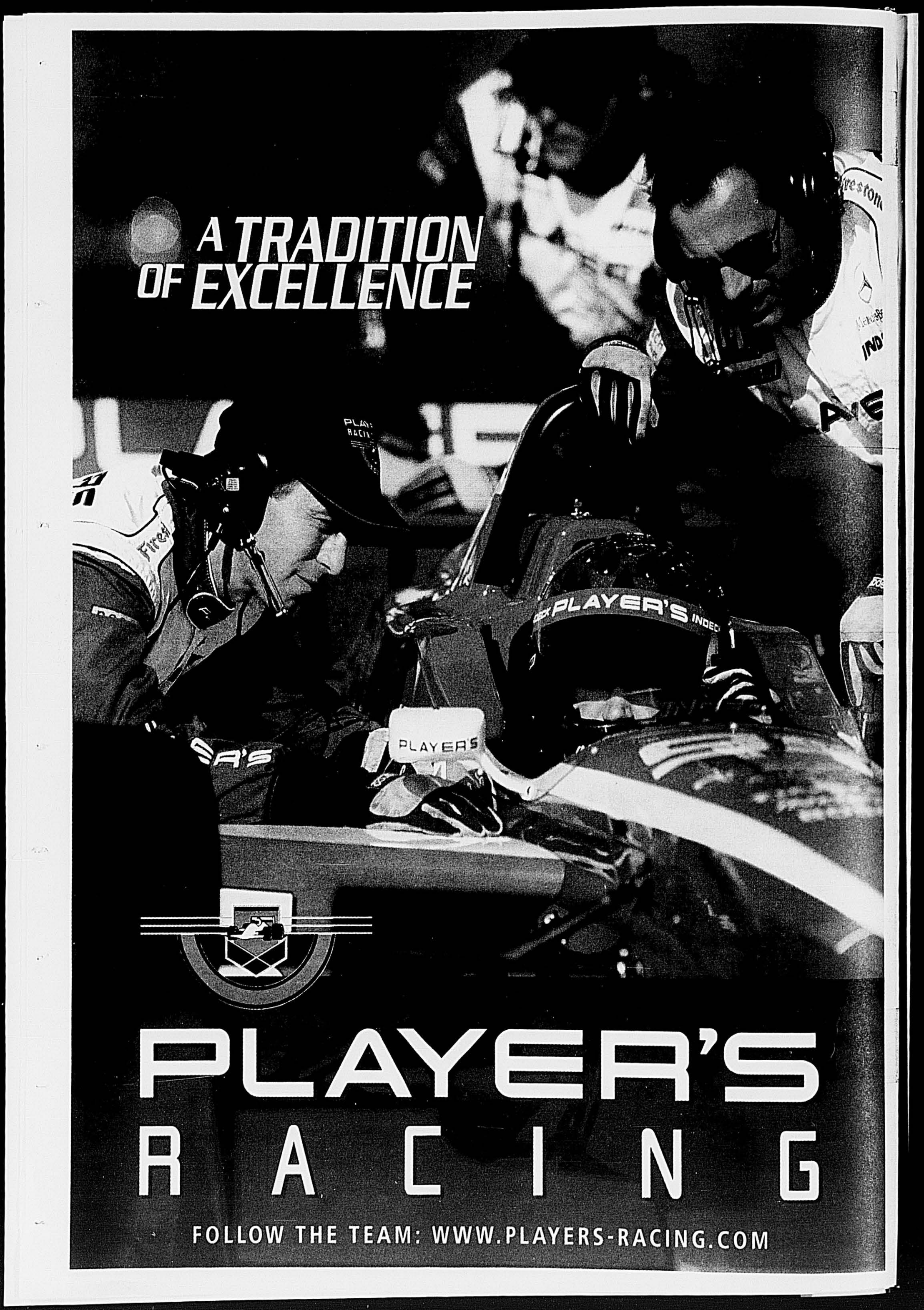
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